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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who comes to us with light and life, turn the illumination of Your love upon our lawmakers, providing them with strength for today and bright hopes for tomorrow. May they feel Your presence moment by moment and comprehend that You can still make the crooked places straight.

Lord, remind them that they are stewards of Your blessings and accountable to You for their actions. Help them also to remember that You require faithfulness from all who serve Your Kingdom.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Senate begins this week with a lot to accomplish in very little time. This week, and in weeks to come, Senate Democrats will continue our work to pass historic legislation to strengthen our economy and renew America's middle class for the 21st century.

Very soon, we will also take up a continuing resolution to avoid a need-less government shutdown and provide emergency funding necessary to settle Afghan refugees and those devastated by this summer's natural disasters.

We must also work on a bipartisan basis to extend the debt ceiling to preserve the very important and cherished full faith and credit of the United States.

The Senate will also consider recently introduced voting rights legislation and advancing President Biden's nominees to the judiciary and to his administration.

So the next few weeks will be critical weeks for the Senate. Members should be prepared for the possibility of working late nights and into the weekend.

On the nominations front, we will begin the week by confirming Ms. Veronica Rossman of Colorado to serve on the Tenth Circuit. Ms. Rossman has spent the majority of her career in public service, representing criminal defendants who cannot afford counsel oftentimes. She would be one of very few Federal public defenders on the entire Federal bench, bringing both personal and professional diversity to our courts at a time when we need to strengthen the public's trust in the Federal judiciary.

In addition to Ms. Rossman's confirmation, Senate Democrats are working to confirm many other nominees for a critical number of Agencies, including the Departments of Defense, State, and Treasury.

Now, unfortunately, some of our Republican colleagues have chosen to play cheap political games and stone-

wall the confirmation of these uncontroversial but essential nominees.

Let's be clear. By blocking these perfectly qualified public servants, my Republican colleagues are deliberately hindering our government's ability to protect our country and to work with our allies abroad.

These nominees should be the work of a few hours at most. Many of them have been reported out of committee with bipartisan support and, under normal circumstances, would be confirmed without any trouble.

And so while my Republican colleagues won't be able to stop these nominees from reaching final confirmation, their stonewalling will drag out what would normally be a routine and easy process. The few obstructionists on the Republican side who are leading this charge are deliberately derailing the confirmation of these important nominees in an all-out effort to gain the support of hard-right elements of their party, and in the process—the nasty political process they are engaged in—they are making Americans less safe at home and abroad. They should stop immediately, and the Republican leader should admonish them.

Now, on the legislative front, Democrats continue to make good progress toward enacting our Build Back Better agenda into law. Last week, the House completed their markups—the House committees completed their markups on the legislative text that underpins Democrats' reconciliation bill.

Here in the Senate, our caucus held a long and productive discussion last week about the substance of our bill. We will continue these discussions as the week progresses.

Now, no one expected that it would be easy to pass legislation to transform the American economy and provide the biggest tax cut for the middle class in a generation. But no one in this body was elected to do only the easy stuff. We have a lot of hard work to do, and

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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